Influences that came from India, either through mainland Southeast Asia (Malaya or Champa) and directly to the Philippines, or indirectly from the southern islands of present-day Indonesia, are still apparent in Caticugan. The importance of astrology to determine the most opportune times for certain activities is typical of the Hinayana Buddhist countries of Burma and Thailand--and also China. Traces of art styles, first originating in India, can be seen in the Garuda-like heads on the bolos of Caticugan.

Beyer believes that the "principal phases" of Neolithic culture reached the Philippines directly from northern and southern China. From this period to the present, Chinese contacts with the Philippines have continued. If there is little visible Chinese content in Caticugan, this also is typical of the Philippines as a whole. Kroeber writes: "There is scarcely an institution, piece of knowledge, or religious belief current in the Philippines that can be derived with certainty from China."[174] The Chinese were rarely interested in meddling or interfering with Filipino ways of living; they came as merchants and their impact was largely economic.[175]

This is not to imply that the Chinese did not influence Philippine culture. Manuel documents the words

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[174] Kroeber, op. cit., p. 17.

[175] H. Otley Beyer, "Early History of Philippine Relations with Foreign Countries, Especially China" in Arsenio E. Manuel, Chinese Elements in the Tagalog Language. Manila, Filipiniana Publications, 1948, p. xvi.

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When the fronds are dry the stiff mid-rib is stripped from each individual leaf. The leaves then are smoothed by running them over the back of a knife or seashell. Buri leaves are cut into fairly regular widths by use of a rattan guide (batacan). (See Plate LXXI.)[1] The batacan is hooked around a leaf and a small knife inserted just above the notch facing the worker; it penetrates the leaf to a second notch on the back of the batacan. By moving the batacan and the knife down the leaf together an even strip is cut. Buri strips, ready for weaving, are called lila.

After a sufficient supply of lilas is prepared, the plaiting of the bag or mat is begun. The only type of plaiting used is illustrated in Plate LXX. Strands used to plait mats and baskets are fairly broad and flat, producing a checkerboard type of design; actually little can be done in plaiting such strands except to pass them alternately over and under. Sleeping mats, unlike bags, are usually plaited with a double thickness. Only one woman in Caticugan made any attempt to decorate her buri bags. The sibokao tree's heartwood makes a brown dye; sometimes, though rarely, she used tanbark as a dye "because I do not have to buy the sibokao to make a dye." She dyed a few buri strips, plaiting them into the bag, making a simple geometric design. Plate LXX, C, illustrates the design made in some placemats she plaited for me.

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[389]

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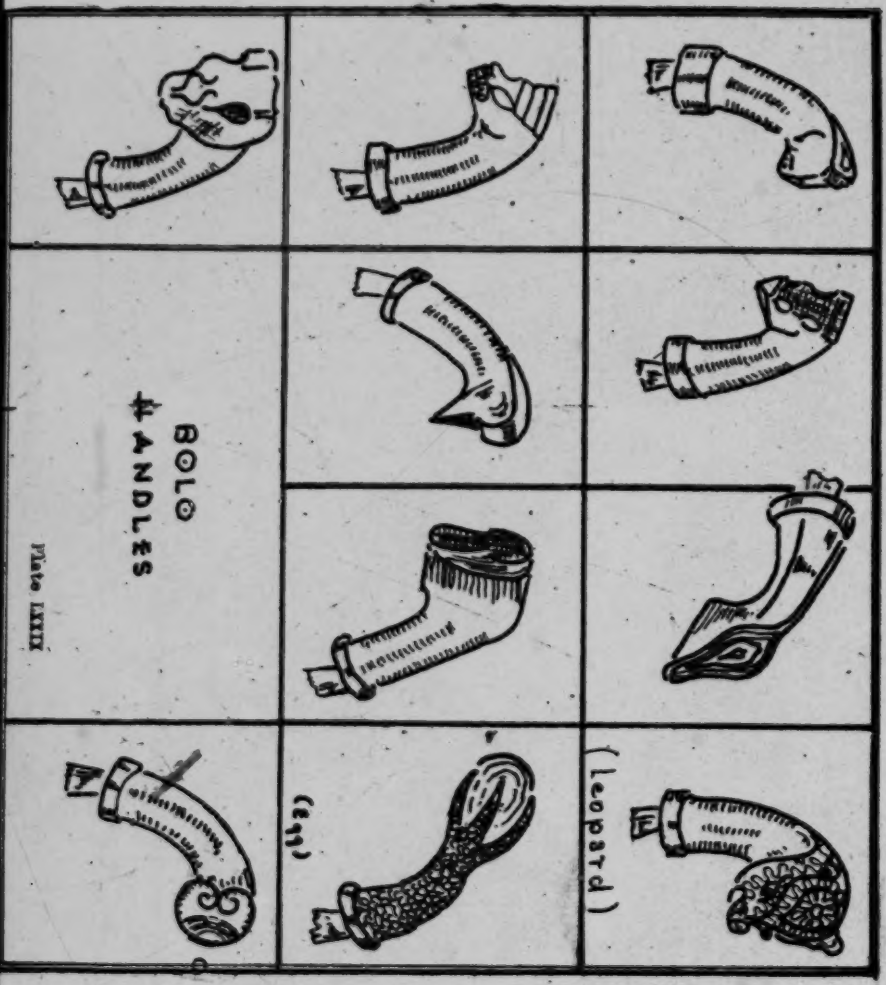
The decreasing number of buri palms in the vicinity of Caticugan may pose a problem for the barriofolk in the

1 [See p. 705, cat. 285 -- Analyst]

20: Hart E-5 (1951) 1954 OA1 Philippines
Central Bisayan OA14



531
412

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20: Hart E-5 (1951) 1954 OA1 Philippines
Central Bisayan OA14

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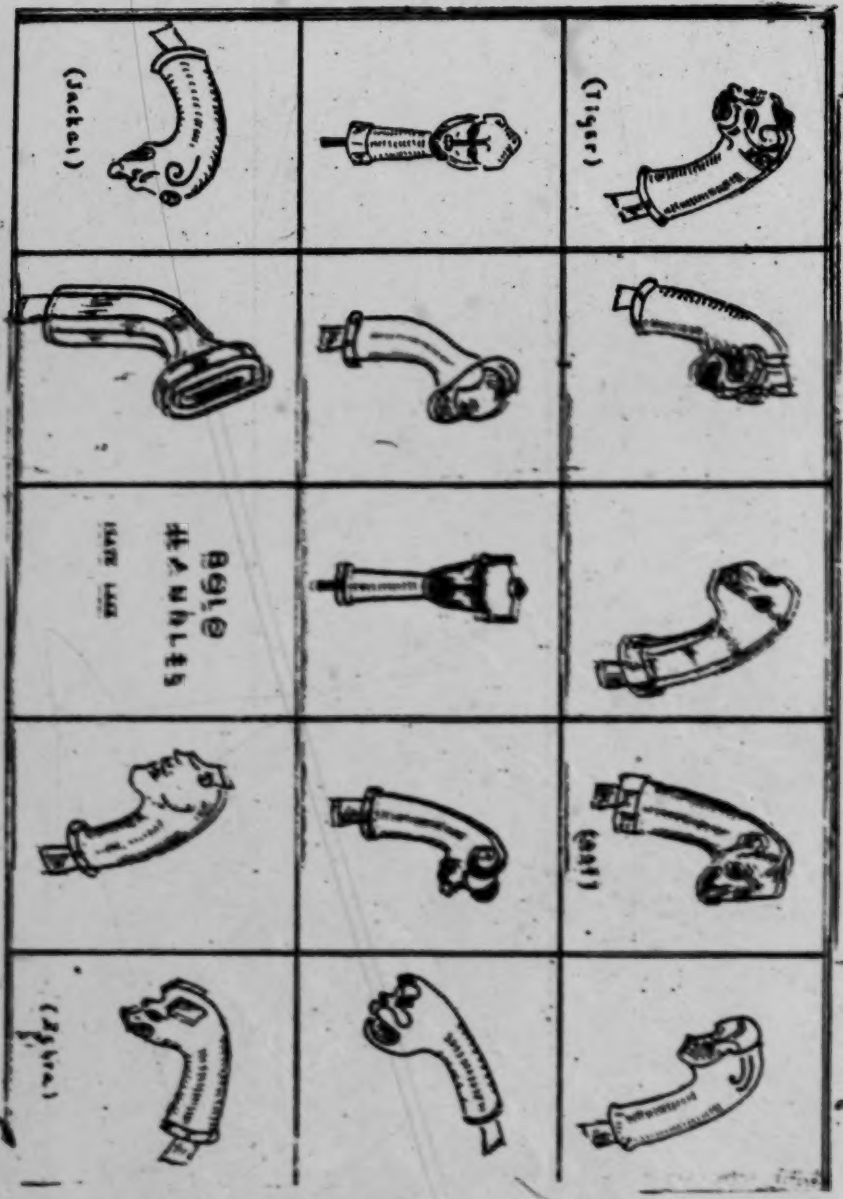

P, 736

Men buy iron bolo blades in the poblacion or Dumaguete and make their own wooden handles. The only decorative wood carving found in Caticugan occurs on the ends of bolo handles. When the owners were asked what animal the carved head on the handle represented, they usually did not know. Most of the carved figures are quite similar in style. (See Plates LXXIX and LXXX.)[1]

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These carved heads on bolo handles in Caticugan may possibly derive from a modified version of the mythical Garuda of ancient Indian folklore and art. The Garuda figure probably was diffused to the Philippines from Indo-China or Indonesia during the ascendancy of Hindu empires in this area, e.g., Champa and Sri-Vishaya.

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Krieger writes:

> The art of metal work, as well as decorative motifs based on the lotus flower and other Hindu cult representations, are characteristic of influence from India [in the Philippines].[21]

Dwellings still exist in Panay that have carved exterior decorations showing Hindu influence.[22] Beyer writes: "The most cultured Philippine languages contain many Sanskrit words, and the native art a noticeable sprinkling of Indian design."[23] Magahats also carve heads of animals on their bolo handles that are quite similar to those of Caticugan.[24] It is my impression that carved bolo handles are found in most parts of the Philippines.

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[21] Herbert W. Krieger, Peoples of the Philippines. War Background Studies No. 4. Washington, Smithsonian Institute, November 15, 1942, p. 30.

[22] A number of archaeological finds in the Visayas indicate Hindu influence in the area. For example, a small bronze image of the Hindu god Siva was found in Mactan, off Cebu, that probably dates from the time of the Madjapahit empire. Beyer, op. cit., p. 361.

1 [See p. 735 ff, cat. 531 or 412 -- Analyst]

[pp. 738 + 739 are missing -- Analyst]

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The barriofolk are quite unaware of the possibility that their Garuda-like carved bolo handles may symbolize Hindu influence in their cultural heritage. It is curious that only bolo handles are selected; none of the other weapons or personal equipment is carved for decorative purposes. Perhaps the explanation lies in the importance attached to a man's bolo in pre-Hispanic Philippines.

Various household articles are made by the barriofolk of Caticugan. Long pieces of bamboo are hollowed and used to carry water from the springs and river to the houses. Spoons and dippers of coconut shell are fixed with rattan to bamboo handles. A few young men made ukeleles from local woods, buying only the gut strings. I never saw parents make toys for their children.

SUMMARY

The meager barrio handicrafts in Caticugan are in a state of decline. Abaca cloth is woven less frequently than in the immediate past and certain types of weaving and fabrics have disappeared. Most barriofolk consider abaca a poor substitute for cotton garments; imported used American clothing is changing the people's mode of dress. Self-sufficiency of the barriofolk in pottery has been lost; today nearly all of them depend on pottery wares produced in Dumaguete. Bamboo drinking cups, plates and eating

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[23] Benitez, op. cit., pp. 21-2.

[24] Oracion, op. cit., p. 40.